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CIA OPERATIONS IN CUBA PRAISED BY PRESIDENT

Kennedy Rebukes Critics of American Intelligence Work in October Crisis

By MARQUIS W. CHILDS

Chief Washington Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch

WASHINGTON, March 6 — President Kennedy expressed confidence today in the operation of the intelligence services in the Cuban crisis last October and rebuked critics who have said that information on the missile build-up was withheld.

In response to a question at his press conference, the President said the four Americans who died in the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961 were killed in the service of their country. While he indicated that they were working as crewmen for the Central Intelligence Agency, he declined to be more specific.

Asked by a reporter if his Administration had not lost momentum both at home and abroad, the President replied that the military threat was far greater a year ago than it is today. As a result, other problems have arisen, he said, which are not nearly so dangerous. He said that Cuba is no longer an offensive military threat.

Covers Wide Area

In the first morning press conference he has held in nearly a year, the President covered virtually the whole foreign policy spectrum. Among the points he made were:

There has been no variation of the number of Russian troops removed from Cuba and he is not satisfied with the rate of removal thus far.

He will insist on a nuclear test ban treaty that will assure the United States that tests can be detected, and there is still a long way to go if any agreement is to be reached with the Soviets on the number of on-site inspections and on details of a treaty.

Denying shipments of oil to Cuba would mean a block of

that would be an act of war and it is not in the national interest at this time to have a war in the Caribbean.

Questioned about the report of a Senate committee that criticized the results of American aid to Southeast Asia, Mr. Kennedy said he saw no prospect of reducing this aid unless the United States was willing to see the area go by default to the Communists.

Satisfied With McCone

"The intelligence forces did a good job," the President said to a questioner who pointed to recent attacks on the Administration's handling of the Cuban crisis of last October. The missiles were discovered. They were removed. A good job was done. I am satisfied with Mr. (John) McCone (Director of the CIA) and the Defense Department."

In hindsight, the President went on, it might have been possible to have spotted the missiles a few days earlier than the Oct. 14 evidence that came out of a U-2 reconnaissance flight. But not until Oct. 16 or 17 was there photographic evidence that was generally acceptable, he said.

The charges, he told reporters, have come fast and furious and many scapegoats have been named, including the CIA and the Defense Department. He said that Gen. Curtis LeMay, chief of staff of the Air Force, had been accused of withholding certain information but LeMay did not have the information.

Cuban Subversion

The President was asked about reports that at the meeting he will hold with the Presidents of Central American countries in Costa Rica on March 18 he will be challenged to provide more active leadership on Cuba. He replied that inasmuch as the principal danger from Cuba was the export of subversion, it was up to the individual countries to bring this threat under control.

"Each country has to do this itself," he said. "We are bringing it to the attention of the Latin American countries and will work with them."

In his response on the nuclear test ban question, the President seemed to be repudiating a statement made by Adrian S. Fisher, deputy director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency.

Fisher, in replying to an attack by Senator Thomas Dodd (Dem.), Connecticut, on the terms of the treaty being worked out by the United States and

indefinite underground testing by the Soviet Union, whether detected or undetected, could make no serious difference in America's nuclear lead.

Not Kennedy Position

"This is not the Administration position," the President said. "We would not permit indefinite underground testing. We would not submit a treaty without assurance that it would not be possible."

Great progress has been made in detection methods, he said. Today it is possible to make discriminating judgments between disturbances caused by earthquakes and nuclear explosions, but this cannot be done without on-site inspections.

The President discussed at some length the effort to agree with the allies in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization on a multinational nuclear force. He defended the proposal to use surface ships for Polaris missiles, saying they could be operated more successfully and with less likelihood of detection than submarines. This would also get around the question of American operation and American secrecy requirements.

But he went on to say that whatever plan the Europeans come up with will be carefully considered. If they decide that present arrangements, with the United States having final say on the use of nuclear weapons, are satisfactory, then this country will accept that decision. France has declined to consider a NATO-controlled force and is building its own nuclear deterrent.

Mr. Kennedy avoided giving a direct answer to a reporter who asked how he justified the sale of General Anilina Dye, the German-owned corporation seized under the Trading with the Enemy Act, in part to Interhandel, a Swiss company.

It has been repeatedly charged, at one time with apparent agreement in the Department of Justice, that Interhandel is actually controlled by the same German interests that controlled the great chemical combine, I. G. Farben, to the service of the Hitler war machine.

The President answered that the settlement announced this week would avoid further litigation.

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